2027 Founding Cohort

Responsible honey bee husbandry means supporting colony health and welfare, helping honey bees thrive and maintaining knowledge as evidence, threats and guidance change. BeeEducated recognises the learning, judgement and commitment behind that work.

The Practical Beekeeper Standard describes the knowledge and practical skills required for competent beekeeping. Candidates demonstrate these through authentic activity, decisions, records and reflection across 16 competency areas. Certification recognises assessed achievement; attendance or payment alone does not establish competence.

Applications close	1 April 2027
Joining fee	£0
Evidence season	April-October 2027
EPA deadline	Complete before 31 March 2028, after successful Gateway
EPA fee	£345, payable after successful Gateway and an approved booking
First annual CPD	1 January-31 March 2029; free

Editorial revision: 16 November 2026 | Approved framework R1.6 unchanged

Who should apply

Experienced beekeepers with suitable access to colony-management opportunities throughout 2027. This route is separate from the beginner theory and selected practical courses. Every required competency must be demonstrated; admission and certification are not guaranteed.

Apply through a skills scan and suitability bio

Rate yourself against every individual Knowledge and Skills requirement. Explain your experience, why this Standard is suitable for you, your access to colonies and realistic 2027 evidence opportunities. Identify support or adjustments you may need. BeeEducated reviews the scan and bio together and may accept, request clarification or decline. Self-ratings are not assessed evidence and do not automatically determine admission. An enquiry does not count as an application or reserve a place.

Agree your assessment plan

Following acceptance, complete induction, the baseline knowledge check and evidence mapping. Agree activities, requirements, evidence methods, support, review points and submission dates with your assessor. The agreed plan records how BeeEducated will support and encourage you to succeed. Initial and monthly plan approval is targeted within three working days; assessed written feedback on substantive monthly submissions is targeted within five working days.

Feedback supports your next step

Feedback identifies strengths, the requirements not yet demonstrated and realistic ideas for gathering further evidence. Suggestions support development but do not guarantee acceptance or a pass. Candidates carry out the activity, make their own decisions and provide authentic evidence. Mentors may support planning and authenticate activity; sufficiency decisions remain with the assessor.

Make use of seasonal opportunities

Submit substantive evidence monthly from April to October 2027. Act on feedback promptly and tell your assessor early when circumstances change. Swarm management, queen work and seasonal husbandry depend on suitable opportunities; delay may leave a gap that cannot be recovered. Never manipulate a colony unnecessarily or compromise welfare to manufacture evidence.

Gateway and the fixed EPA deadline

Gateway confirms sufficient accepted evidence for all mandatory requirements, including the required range, before EPA. The 2027 Founding Cohort has no deferral to the 2028 beekeeping season. EPA may take place from November 2027 and must be completed before 31 March 2028. This fixed deadline replaces the usual three-month-after-Gateway rule for this cohort. It is not an extra season for gathering missing practical evidence. Book in good time; candidates who do not meet Gateway cannot progress to EPA through this cohort.

Assessment methods and grading

The planned cohort EPA is a recorded 90-minute remote professional discussion based on the accepted portfolio, with identity checks and independent assessment. It explores decisions, interpretation, adaptability and reflection. Final grades are Pass, Merit or Distinction, subject to quality assurance. The authorised Assessment Plan governs methods, range, winter-specific requirements and grading. Discussion or scenarios cannot replace mandatory practical evidence unless an authorised requirement explicitly permits that method.

Your certificate and verifiable credential

Successful candidates receive an A4 Certificate of Competence and a unique digital credential recording the achieved Standard and version, grade and award date. A verification link and QR code allow others to check the award. Public information is privacy-controlled. Website examples are demonstrations, not real awards. A proposed personalised suit badge remains a separate concept unless expressly included in the offer.

Continued commitment through CPD

Annual CPD supports learning and reflection as bee-health risks, evidence and guidance change. It is distinct from the original assessment and does not repeat every practical skill each year. Original achievement remains verifiable if CPD later becomes not current; CPD currency is shown separately. Payment alone does not establish current CPD status.

Annual CPD arrangements

The first cycle is 1 January-31 March 2029, free of charge. Submit a Statement of Currency, complete updates and the knowledge check, and resolve any review queries. Read the Annual CPD Guide for the full process, currency status and reactivation arrangements.

Your next step

Read the Standard and assessment guidance, consider your evidence opportunities, then check beeeducated.co.uk/2027-founding-cohort/ for application availability. Use the enquiry form while applications are closed. The website will link to Moodle once the application process is ready. For personal information, see beeeducated.co.uk/privacy/.